

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9237

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AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDOCOSOUTH

DIA WASHDC DI-5

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 1962

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT CY

SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH EX-FOREIGN MINISTER

1. DCM CALLED ON JOHN CHRISTOPHIDES UNDER PRETEXT OF FAREWELL CALL, FOUND HIM SAFE AND APPRECIATIVE THAT COUP ORGANIZERS HAD TREATED HIM COURTEOUSLY. VIEWS BELOW INTERESTING, NOT BECAUSE HE IS PLUGGED INTO CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS (HE HAD ONLY PARTIAL PICTURE THROUGH GRAPE-VINE) BUT BECAUSE HE IS MEMBER OF NICOSIA ESTABLISHMENT WHO HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH MAKARIOS.

2. CHRISTOPHIDES PROFESSED LOYALTY TO MAKARIOS, SAID THAT CLERIDES IN OWN INTEREST SHOULD RECOGNIZE HE IS ONLY ACTING FOR MAKARIOS, THAT CLERIDES HAD MANY ENEMIES WHO WOULD OPPOSE HIM IF THEY FELT HE WAS MAKING FOR PRESIDENCY.

PARADOXICALLY, HOWEVER, HE ADDED CLERIDES IS ACTING FOR CYPRUS' GOOD AND THAT HE IS NEAREST THING TO
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GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE INDIVIDUAL AT THIS TIME, THAT MAKARIOS

EFFORT TO RETURN NOW WOULD TRIGGER CIVIL WAR. HE WOUND UP SUGGESTING ISSUE SHOULD BE KEPT DELIBERATELY UNCLEAR, THAT CYPRIOTS SHOULD AVOID FIGHT IN NEW YORK AS TO WHO REPRESENTS CYPRUS, AND THAT PERSONAL EMISSARY SHOULD TRY TO PERSUADE MAKARIOS TO TAKE LOW POSTURE FOR PRESENT.

3. CHRISTOPHIDES MUCH CONCERNED AT POSSIBILITY OF CIVIL WAR, SOUGHT DEUS EX MACHINA WITH SUGGESTION THAT KARAMANLIS ASSERT STRONG LEADERSHIP HERE. AGAIN, HOWEVER, HE WAS UNABLE TO PROPOSE HOW KARAMANLIST HIMSELF WOULD HANDLE PROBLEM OF PRESIDENCY.

4. BY CONTRAST, CHRISTOPHIDES ACCEPTED WITHOUT A MURMUR PROSPECT OF VERY STIFF TERMS TURKS LIKELY TO DEMAND FOR CEASE-FIRE, INCLUDING RIGHT TO PROTECT TURK CYPRIOTS EVERYWHERE ON ISLAND. HE ACCEPTED THIS AS PRICE OF COUP AND HIS ONLY QUESTION WAS WHETHER TURKS WOULD GO ON TO TAKE ENTIRE ISLAND.

5. CHRISTOPHIDES EXPECTS ECONOMIC DISASTER FOR CYPRUS, CITES OWN INDEBTEDNESS FOR SPECULATIVE LAND PURCHASE NOW IN TURKISH HANDS IN KYRENIA AS TYPE OF PROBLEM FACING MANY OTHERS, EXPECTS HEAVY UNEMPLOYMENT AND EXCHANGE CRISIS, HOPES FOR UNSPECIFIED AMERICAN AND OTHER FOREIGN HELP.

6. CHRISTOPHIDES HAD ONE HISTORICAL VIGNETTE AS TO ORIGIN OF CRISIS. WHEN DCM ASKED WHAT HAD LED ARCHBISHOP TO INVITE CONFRONTATION WITH TAUNTING LETTER TO IOANNIDES, CHRISTOPHIDES (AFTER ALME ATTEMPT AT JUSTIFICATION) DESCRIBED COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' MEETING IN WHICH CONCERNS WERE EXPRESSED THAT MAKARIOS WAS LEAVING IOANNIDES NO WAY OUT. ARCHBISHOP RESPONDED THAT IN VIEW OF GRECO/TURK CONFRONTATION IOANNIDES PROBABLY WOULD NOT MOVE AGAINST HIM, THAT IF HE DID, MAKARIOS WOULD WIN EITHER WAY: "IF HE TOPPLES ME, I BECOME A HERO. IF I TOPPLE HIM, PROBLEM IS SOLVED." CHRISTOPHIDES REMARKED THAT UNFORTUNATELY MAKARIOS HAD NOT THOUGHT OF POSSIBILITY THEY WOULD TOPPLE EACH OTHER.

7. CHRISTOPHIDES CLAIMED FROM "GOOD SOURCES" THAT CLERIDES IS PLANNING CABINET SHAKEUP, MAY ASK SEVERAL OLD MEMBERS TO RETURN, INCLUDING CHRISTOPHIDES HIMSELF. APPARENTLY HAD NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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ADDRESSED PROBLEM AS TO HOW CLERIDES COULD MAKE SUCH MOVES WITHOUT ENDANGERING HIS OWN SUPPORT FOR RIGHT.

8. COMMENT: THIS IS NEAREST THING TO MAKARIOS SUPPORTER WE HAVE HEARD FROM THIS WEEK(EVEN EX-FONMIN DIRGEN VENIAMIN WHO WAS PROBABLY PERSONALLY CLOSER TO MAKARIOS ASSUMES HIS RETURN IS IMPOSSIBLE, PINS HOPE ON CLERIDES). IF THIS IS SAMPLE OF FEELING AMONG HIS SUPPORTERS, THEY ARE A LOST AND

DISPIRITED GROUP INDEED. DISSIONATE REACTION TO TURKISH
LAND ACQUISITION IS TYPICAL OF OTHERS' REACTIONS.
DAVIES

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